

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3119

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 1109

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, US, SO, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET BASE ISSUE: SOMALI DENIALS CONTINUE

REF: MOGADISCIO 1101

1. JULY 27 DENIAL BY GENERAL SAMATAR (REFTEL) IS LATEST AND MOST DETAILED SOMALI RESUDIATION OF US STATEMENTS ON SOVIET FACILITIES AT BERBERA. ACCORDING TODAY'S SONNA BULLETIN, SIAD SPEECH AT KAMPALA'S 12TH OAU SUMMIT OPENING ON JUNE 28 ALSO CONTAINED DENIAL OF US CHARGES. SIAD REPORTEDLY TOLD OPENING SUMMIT SESSION THAT THROUGH ITS QTE MALICIOUS PROPAGANDA, PENTAGON WANTS TO JUSTIFY CONSTRUCTION OF ANGLO-AMERICAN NAVAL BASE AT DIEGO GARCIA UNQTE. SIAD ALSO ACCUSED US OF ATTEMPTING RETARD SOMALIA'S REVOLUTIONARY PROGRESS, WHICH IS LINE SAMATAR ALSO TOOK IN HIS PREPARED STATEMENT.

2. SIAD AND SAMATAR STATEMENTS OF JULY 28 AND 27 ARE LATEST IN SERIES OF DENIALS APPEARING IN SOMALI MEDIA SINCE FIRST WEEK IN JULY. ON JULY 9, IDI AMIN DENIED SOVIET BASE CHARGES
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DURING MOGADISCIO VISIT. ON JULY 18, KENYAN PRESIDENT KENYATTA'S

DAUGHTER VISITED BERBERA DURING TOUR OF SOMALIA TO QTE SEE FOR HERSELF THAT NO SOVIET BASE EXISTED UNQTE. ON JULY 19, SEMI-OFFICIAL WEEKLY HORSEED DENIED THAT SIAD HAD OFFERED US FACILITIES IN SOMALIA AND THAT SOVIET BASE EXISTED AT BERBERA. ON JULY 27, SIAD TOLD VISITING ARAB AND IRANIAN JOURNALISTS THAT BASE ALLEGATIONS WERE PENTAGON PROPAGANDA AND THAT JOURNALISTS' VISITS HAD DISPROVED SOVIET BASE ALLEGATIONS. THEN ON JULY 27, SAMATAR RELEASED HIS OWN CAREFULLY PREPARED STATEMENT WHICH WENT INTO FAR MORE DETAIL ON BERBERA ISSUE AND WITH MUCH MORE ANTI-US INNUENDO THEN PREVIOUS OFFICIAL STATEMENTS.

3. SAMATAR'S PREPARED STATEMENT WAS RELEASED AT JULY 27 PRESS CONFERENCE, APPEARED IN SONNA ON JULY 28, AND WAS PUBLISHED IN OFFICIAL DAILY OKTOBER STAR TODAY, JULY 29. SAMATAR'S STATEMENT SHOWS SOME SOPHISTICATION, IS NOT WITHOUT LOGIC AND APPEARS REPRESENT SOMALI MILITARY WHOSE VOICE WE HAVE NOT HEARD BEFORE. STATEMENT IS REASONABLY CREDIBLE MIXTURE OF TRUTH AND HALF-TRUTH, WHICH ALSO BORROWS FROM SOVIET PROPAGANDA LINE (I.E., DIEGO GARCIA IS BURDEN TO US TAXPAYER: US MEDIA IS DIRECTED IN LARGE MEASURE BY ZIONISTS WHO CREATE MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN AMERICAN PEOPLE AND PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE OF WORLD; US MILITARISTS MOTIVATED BY DEADLY FEAR OF SOVIET UNION AND WORLD SOCIALISM; AMERICAN POLICY MAKERS FOR AFRICA DEEPLY WORRIED BY SOCIALIST DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND OUT TO DEFLECT PROGRESS IN THAT DIRECTION, ETC.). WE WOULD SUPPOSE THERE MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN SOME DIRECT SOVIET INPUT THROUGH MINDEF CHANNELS.

4. WHILE WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ABOUT SAMATAR'S PURPOSE IN ISSUING STATEMENT AT THIS TIME, WE TEND TO VIEW IT AS OFFICIAL SOMALI MILITARY LINE ON SOVIET PRESENCE AT BERBERA WHICH IS INTENDED PRIMARILY FOR INTERNAL CONSUMPTION, BOTH OFFICIAL AND FOR SOMALI PUBLIC AT LARGE. OKTOBER STAR CARRIED IT TODAY IN SOMALI LANGUAGE, AS WELL AS IN ARABIC. WE NOTE THAT SAMATAR MAKES NO RPT NO ATTEMPT TO IGHRE OR SOFTHEDAL SOVIET PRESENCE AT BERBERA (I.E., SOVIET-PROVIDED MIL EQUIPMENT FOR SOMALIA QTE OBVIOUSLY DEMANDS PRESENCE OF SOVIET MILITARY EXPERTISE UNQTE) AND DOES NOT ATTEMPT IGNORE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES AT BERBERA WHICH SOMALIA INTENDS MAKE FULL USE OF QTE ECONOMICALLY AND MILITARILY FOR BENEFIT OF OUR PEOPLE, AFRICA AND ARAB WORLD UNQTE.

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5. PUBLICITY GIVEN SENATOR BARTLETT'S CONCLUSIONS AND THOSE OF CONGRESSMAN STRATTON BY BBC, BY VOA AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA HAS OF COURSE GREATLY INTERESTED SOMALI MAN-IN-STREET, AS WELL AS SOMALI OFFICIALDOM, AS TO EXACT NATURE OF MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AT BERBERA. PERHAPS SOMALI DOUBTS ABOUT GSDDR'S OFFICIAL DENIALS MORE EXTENSIVE THAN WE REALIZE.

6. WE UNDERSTAND, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT AT LONG TALK SESSION WITH SOMALI UNIVERSITY TEACHERS AT HALENE TRAINING CENTER ON JUNE 22, SOMALI INSTRUCTOR RAISED BERBERA ISSUE WITH SIAD, AND TOLD HIM US HAD TAKEN PHOTOS OF BERBERA, WHICH HAD BEEN RECENTLY CIRCULATED IN BRITISH PARLIAMENT. GIVEN CONFLICTING STATEMENTS ABOUT SOVIET PRESENCE AT BERBERA, SOMALI QUESTIONER SAID THAT PEOPLE NEEDED TO BE TOLD TRUTH ABOUT BERBERA. SIAD REPORTEDLY DELIVERED LONG HARANGUE TO STUDENT DOUBTERS ABOUT THEIR QUOTE COLONIALIST UNQUOTE MENTALITY AND THEN STALKED OUT. OUR PRELIMINARY READING IS THAT SAMATAR'S LONG STATEMENT IS INTENDED PRIMARILY TO CONVINCE THOSE SOMALI SKEPTICS WHO NOT REPORT NOT YET FULLY PERSUADED THAT SOMALI GOVT HAS BEEN TELLING TRUTH ABOUT BERBERA.
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